



## Message from the President . . .

I have spent some time reflecting on my short article for this newsletter. What to say that would contribute to the good material within this slim volume? Where would I start? What would people want to read about?

The questions went on and on, the more I reflected the more questions came into my mind. And then it hit me like the proverbial ton of bricks. I would talk about ‘thinking time’ and how this is important in the middle school classroom.

It has been my experience that when we give students time to think, questions will come to mind which will lead to more thinking and then more questions.

Have you met those students who naturally like to question everything? Most of us would remember the very young child who is always full of questions. Why is it that? How come I cannot? Why did you say? There seemed to be an endless list of questions and I don’t particularly remember the child waiting for an answer, although some did.

When do they stop asking questions? I remember writing on reports things like—could do much better if he or she asked more questions or another favourite of mine was—would benefit for more participation in lessons. I wanted the student to engage. To think, to ask questions!

I believe middle schooling philosophy and changes in pedagogy encourages young adolescents to continue questioning, thinking and making sense for themselves.

We need to keep those questions coming and to foster good listening, and personal and communal reflective practices.

Innovative curriculum design coupled with a positive learning environment can and will encourage the vast majority to engage in the learning process. I have learned to listen to my students and to plan my lessons to suit their needs and interests wherever possible. However it is not always possible to live up to the ideal and there are times when we have just got to do what we can and no amount of imaginative machinations can make the lesson interesting beyond the mundane, but that is alright too. Students will respond and learn from the occasional apparently “boring” lesson.

We are looking for examples or ideas of best practice to put on our web site so that we can share these lessons. It would be great to have a bank of such material.

If you have anything you would like to contribute please contact Jody or Pat who can organise to have it up loaded to our site.

2005 is going to be a very big year for the association and we will all need to work together to prepare for our international conference in 2006.

I do hope that many of you will be able to take advantage of the PD events we have planned for 2005. See inside for details of the first of these.

Best Wishes for the Holidays and I hope to see many of you in the New Year at one or other of our PD events.

Christine Lee

### Special Points of Interest:

- **President’s Address**
- **The DET evaluation of middle schools**
- **Reflections on the Larry Brendtro PD**
- **An innovative integrated program and the establishment of middle schooling: *full articles on the e-publication site***
- **Two sensational PDs - Michael Nagel and Andrew Fuller. Full details inside. Book Now!**
- **Fascinating research - Yu-Gi-Oh: *What is Really Goh-ing On?***
- **Interesting Internet Sites**



**Best wishes for a peaceful and happy festive season!**

**From your 2004/2005 committee.**

We have had so many interesting contributions this time that the newsletter is full. So have a look at the **e-publication site** for some new excursion information, along with a new book review and the full articles on *Integrated Learning: Caught or Taught?* and *The Establishment of Middle Schooling @ Kinross College*. Great holiday reading!

## An Evaluation of Middle Schooling in WA Government Schools . . .

Over the next 2 years, the Department of Education & Training will be conducting a rigorous evaluation of the different approaches to middle schooling in WA government schools in order to identify curricular, teaching approaches and support structures that provide the best outcomes for early adolescence.

The evaluation will focus on two key questions:

- In what ways do schools that adopt a 'middle schooling' approach have *different practices* than conventional schools?
- Do schools that implement a 'middle schooling' approach achieve better *student outcomes* for their students?

Areas under investigation will include school management and organisation, curriculum, teaching and learning practices, behav-

iour management and pastoral care as well as the full range of student outcomes - social, emotional, behavioural as well as academic. The evaluation will also investigate whether a particular approach achieves better student outcomes for a particular student profile eg. male / female; indigenous / non indigenous; more or less academically able and from high / low socio academic backgrounds. The DET anticipates this comprehensive evaluation will provide valuable information in terms of what's working, what's not and why in not only those schools that have adopted middle schooling, but also those that haven't.

Our association is represented on the Reference Group by immediate past president and principal of Codanup Community College middle school, **Gaylia Mitcham**.

### Interesting Internet Sites ...

<http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/abled/studies/perspect.htm> An Education Department website that looks at aboriginal perspectives across the eight learning areas. Some excellent ideas.

<http://www.mcs.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/R.Knott/Fibonacci/fibnat.html> A Maths site for Fibonacci numbers. Some interesting open-ended tasks could be developed using the information from the plants section, in particular.

<http://www.creativedrama.com/> Looking for some great drama ideas? Check out this site!

<http://www.sstuwa.org.au/gallery/album06> This one's a bit different... A selection of mind maps and concept maps collected by Barrie Bennett and displayed on the WA State School Teachers Union site.

Space does not permit inclusion of all details of what is happening within the middle schooling community. So visit our site at <http://www.msawa.asn.au> and click on **latest e-publications**. New publications include a fictional book review; new excursion information and the full text of *Integrated Learning: Caught or Taught?* and *The Establishment of Middle Schooling @ Kinross College*.

### \*\*\* Membership now due for Renewal \*\*\*

Please renew your membership by 31 January 2005

New members welcome. **Join or renew today!**

Enjoy the many benefits of membership, including an informative monthly newsletter and discounts to outstanding PDs.



## REGISTRATION

To register as a member, please complete the following form and post or fax it, with cheque to:

Individual:	\$ 25.00
Student:	\$ 12.50
Organisation:	\$150.00

The Middle Schooling Association of WA (Inc)  
c/- Safety Bay Senior High School  
PO Box 6122  
WAIKIKI 6169

Fax:(08) 9592-4672

Name: (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (Last) \_\_\_\_\_

School / Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (PCode) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (PCode) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflections . . .

### Reflections on the Larry Brendtro Seminars on 'reclaiming the reluctant'.

Dr Lesley Newhouse-Maiden

In November, I was privileged to be a participant in Larry Brendtro's two-day seminar at Edith Cowan University. Most of the participants were teachers with a wide range of specialisations, and a sprinkling of lecturers in education, all with a central concern for 'at risk' students. As a teacher educator, I was concerned with the lack of engagement of many adolescents and the particular challenge for teachers in fostering resilience and life competencies in the middle years. I was already conversant with Brendtro's prevention and remediation strategies to "reclaim youth" that involved a whole community approach. Essentially Brendtro's seminars are well structured "conversations" amongst professionals about management, motivation, and (re)engagement of our children and the strategies that family, school, and the community choose to use in producing well-balanced, productive citizens now and for the future.

Brendtro and his colleagues Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2002) have undergirded their reclaiming youth program, especially for 'at risk' students, with a four phase "circle of courage" representing healthy living from an American Indian perspective. The four points of the "circle of courage" are regarded as "norms of resilience", namely attachment (belonging), achievement (mastery), autonomy (independence), and altruism (generosity). The child is viewed as a 'sacred' person and nurtured by the whole community in accomplishing age-related developmental tasks (see Figure opposite).

The authors argue that if the circle of courage is broken then the individual is 'at risk' and should be "reclaimed" with the help of significant others who

have been trained in implementing a response ability program and other preventive and remedial strategies depending on the seriousness of the 'at risk' behaviours (Brendtro & du Toit n.d.).

His stories of "reclaimed" youth touched both our hearts and minds. I would encourage parents, administrators, teachers, and university lecturers in education, psychology, and youth studies, to visit [www.reclaiming.com](http://www.reclaiming.com) and to read Larry's latest Editorial (Brendtro, 2004, Winter). I hope that engagement, even on the web, will challenge some conventional views about behaviour management and hopefully encourage you to try some of Brendtro's strategies with your middle years students.

#### References

- Brendtro, L. (2004, Winter).(Ed.). 'The resilience code: Finding greatness in youth' by Larry Brendtro and Scott Larson. *Reclaiming Children and Youth. Cultivating Resilience*, 12(4), From the Editor. Retrieved 20/11/04 @ [www.cyc-net.org/Journals/rcy-12-4.html](http://www.cyc-net.org/Journals/rcy-12-4.html)
- Brendtro, L. & du Toit, L. Response Ability Pathways @ [www.reclaiming.com](http://www.reclaiming.com) Practical training is provided for educators, youth professionals, mentors, parents, and all who live and work with youth. RAP is based on the Circle of Courage, resilience research, and recent brain studies.
- Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M. & Van Bockern, S. (1990). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.



Figure 4: Building Courage in Middle Years (after Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002).

## Integrated Learning: Caught or Taught?

*This inspirational article, written by Steve Kamp, is available in full on our e-publication site:*  
<http://www.msawa.asn.au/>

In first semester 2004, the staff of a small Catholic school in Carnarvon took on a challenging integrated learning programme, with the aim of achieving outcomes in seven subject areas. The culmination of student, teacher, parent and community collaboration was the production of the 'Cruisin Calypso' Theatre Restaurant.

Some of the positive effects of the curriculum integration noted by Steve Kamp and Andrew Sloan include:

- A noticeable increase in levels of confidence by many of the ESL students.
- Ongoing depth of subject knowledge as demonstrated by summative and formative assessments.
- Levels of ability demonstrated by way of open-ended task skills previously explored.
- Physical demonstrations of camaraderie, tolerance, mateship and acceptance of difference where there had previously been none.

The integrated curriculum project received positive and encouraging attention of both the CEO (Catholic Education) and the Curriculum Council and provided students with life-long skills and a purpose to work hard for themselves.

**ANDREW FULLER**  
 'CREATING A RESILIENT SCHOOL'  
 THURSDAY, 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2005  
 MUNJA GARDENS, BALDIVIS  
 (just south of turn-off to Old Fremantle Rd)



**After-school seminar session**

3.00 -6.00pm

(includes 30 min break for afternoon tea)

**'CREATING A RESILIENT SCHOOL FOR ADOLESCENT LEARNERS'**

*An introduction*

Key steps in becoming a highly effective school include:

- \* conducting an instructional audit of the school - what's really happening and more importantly, what are students learning?
- \* recruiting and motivating staff with a genuine desire to teach adolescent learners
- \* 'open' classrooms where students and teachers actively engage and collaborate around "the work"
- \* targeted staff development focusing on developing a reflective practice
- \* activities integrated into the school's days and weeks; and visible school and class rewards are provided for academic success.

This seminar provides an overview of the process. Andrew will provide notes you can use in your school to commence or continue this process

**Please register by completing a registration form and returning it to us, with your payment, by**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2005**

*by using one of the following*

1. Fax to Safety Bay SHS: (08) 9592-4672
2. Post: MSAWA C% Safety Bay SHS  
PO Box 6122, Waikiki WA 6169
3. Email [Chistina.Kemp@det.wa.edu.au](mailto:Chistina.Kemp@det.wa.edu.au)  
(Please include all relevant details on registration form if emailing) For further information please phone Gaylia Mitcham: (08) 9581-090

**REGISTRATION:** \$65 members: \$85 non-members



Andrew has established programs for the promotion of mental health in schools, substance abuse prevention, the reduction of violence and bullying, suicide prevention programs and for assisting homeless young people. Recently, Andrew has been involved in developing programs for boys who have witnessed violence in their homes.

Andrew has been an advisor to many governmental and private bodies including David Pennington's Drug Advisory Committee, the TAC (Transport Accident Commission), the Department of Education's suicide prevention programs and the Department of Human Services programs for high risk children and adolescents as well as the Transport Accident Commission, the NSW Drug Education strategy and the full service schools program.

Andrew conducts workshops for organisations, parents, students, teachers and health professionals on a wide range of topics. He has presented large seminars and in-school workshops, exploring the main factors related to the promotion of resilience and the positive ways schools can adapt to nurture their teachers and students.

<b>Middle Schooling Association of WA Tax Invoice - Andrew Fuller Workshop</b>	
ABN: 94250-851-782	
<i>(Please make cheque payable to the MSAWA and forward together with registration form to PO Box 6122, Waikiki 6169)</i>	
<i>Name &amp; Position</i>	
<i>School</i>	
<i>Address</i>	
<i>Contact</i>	<i>Ph:</i> <i>Fax:</i>
<i>Email</i>	

## Yu-Gi-Oh: What is Really Goh-ing On?

Kim Tomlinson

Who else has seen this scenario? You are teaching your Year 6/7 class English. Yes, English is not always riveting, but it is essential for the children's future. The school, the community and the Education Department agree that it is important that children learn to write sentences correctly and look at spelling patterns. While you are explaining the task, that you have spent quite some time deciding on and preparing, Daniel and Josh are already clearly not concentrating...or listening, to any of your valuable instructions. The two boys are sitting, waiting to either interrupt with some corny comment, or for the time to pass so as they can go out to recess. Or, maybe, they are trying to work out a clever scheme to get the bubblegum, they clearly know is against school rules, out of their pocket and to all the 'important' children's mouths without getting caught.

As a teacher, you know perfectly well the work they produce, if they produce any, will be slap dash and generally not to their ability. You are aware of the research which shows that boys are more disruptive in class than girls, especially in the middle years of schooling, in particular in language/ English classes. You are aware too that they are less likely than girls to be working to their perceived ability and less likely to be excited by and see the relevance of school.

However, you walk past Josh and Daniel at recess. Whilst you are on duty you watch how they have somehow managed to organize half the boys in the school into rounds of Yu-Gi-Oh tournaments. Josh and Daniel are now very busy policing the game, to make sure that none of the stringent and very precise rules prescribed in the Yu-Gi-Oh manual have been broken. Not are they only suddenly horrified by a child who goes against the rules, but they are deciphering difficult words and instructions, (you had no idea they could read let alone comprehend and explain), in easier terminology to the younger boys. No longer are they bent on rule breaking, not following instructions and not listening. Suddenly, the outcome levels they are achieving in English have gone through the roof.

This gives you hope for the next session of class, af-

ter recess, but alas, they turn back into the normal Josh and Daniel. Why does this phenomenon occur? Do principals just ban commercial games like Yu-Gi-Oh in the school, so we don't have to witness this phenomenon and feel bad about not managing to elicit this behaviour in the classroom?

The questions go on: What is it about these games that boys in particular find so fascinating? Why are the sub-cultures they create so attractive to boys and why do they uphold the outside imposed and complex rules of these sub-cultures so stringently? What knowledge and skills do they need to participate successfully in these games? The language is complex. The rules of the games are so complicated most adults will not even attempt to play with their children due to the embarrassment of not being able to keep up, as well as the amount of time it takes to decipher and memorise the rules. The mathematics involved in the games includes difficult mental algorithms and using a range of problem solving strategies involving a number of variables.

My PhD study, *Real-Time Pedagogy for Real-Time Children*, aims to identify the underlying elements of the sub-culture that boys find exciting. It will propose ways in which these elements can be adapted to or adopted by the classroom to make learning more appealing to boys, particularly those who are under performing. As both a primary school teacher and a mother of a lively eight-year old boy, I feel greatly concerned about the underperformance of many of the boys I teach. I worry about the future of these boys as I see so many of them not working to their full potential in the classroom and then performing so well in the playground.

I would be interested to know if there are other teachers out there who have noticed the same phenomena, or who have stories of their own in this area. I am interested too in having discussions on the way your school has handled the rise of the popular media saturated sub-cultures, successfully or unsuccessfully. If you are interested in chatting, contact me, Kim Tomlinson, on (08) 92973983, or

[kimtomlinson@eftel.com](mailto:kimtomlinson@eftel.com).

## The Establishment of Middle Schooling @ Kinross College, By Anna Palmer

Interesting reading for anyone involved in middle schooling. Anna summarises the process undertaken to establish a new middle school. Read the full article on the **MSAWA e-publications site**: <http://www.msawa.asn.au> and click on **latest e-publications**.

# Michael Nagel

## The Gendered Brain



### Sexing the brain: how understanding adolescent neurology and the 'gendered brain' can enhance educational environments for teachers and students

3 HOUR WORKSHOP: Repeat workshops. Please indicate your choice in the boxes provided below.

VENUE 1: Kinross College, Falkland Way, Kinross

WHEN: Monday, 28 February 2005, 4.00pm - 7.00pm

VENUE 2: Penrhos College, Morrison Street, Como

WHEN: Tuesday, 1 March 2005, 4.00pm - 7.00pm

COST: \$65.00 for MSAWA members \$85 for non-members

A light meal and workshop materials are included in the cost.

PAYMENT: Please register by completing a registration form and returning it to us with your payment, by **Monday, 21 February 2005** by using one of the following:

1. Fax to: Safety Bay SHS: (08) 9592 4672
2. Post to: MSAWA, c/- Safety Bay SHS, PO Box 6122, Waikiki WA 6169
3. Email: Christina.Kemp@det.wa.edu.au (Please include all relevant details.)

For further information about payment, please contact Christina Kemp (08) 9527 0200

CONTACT: To find out more about venue and registration, contact Pat Kershaw on (08) 6304 5978



#### DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP:

In the last decade, medical and scientific research has provided new insights into the neurological and physiological differences of the male and female brain. Some of the most profound differences exist during pre-adolescence and when children enter puberty. This has tremendous implications for educators working with 'Middle Years' students in that brain difference also impacts on how boys and girls learn and behave. This seminar will provide evidence and insights into aspects of a 'gendered brain', the intricacies of adolescent brain development and the implications this has for educators as well as providing practical strategies for parents, teachers and administrators working with 'Middle Years' environments.

#### INTRODUCING YOUR PRESENTER:

Michael Nagel has just completed his PhD which looks at how middle school children in Australia and Canada conceptualise various school experiences. He has been involved in education in Canada, Japan and Australia, has taught across primary, secondary and tertiary sectors and has also worked as a behaviour specialist. Mike is the newly appointed Head of Middle Schooling for EDUCANG Ltd which incorporates Forest Lake College, The Springfield College and The Lakes College in Brisbane. His current research interests focus on neurological development in children, how children 'see aspects of their world'. The importance of student voice in educational decision making and enhancing the total school environment for boys and girls. He is a Master Trainer for the US based 'Gurian Institute' which focuses on gendered brain theory and how boys and girls learn differently. He has presented discussion papers, workshops and seminars nationally and internationally and draws his insights and ideas from almost two decades of practical educational experiences, contemporary neurological and educational research and from watching his two children, Madeline and Harrison, grow up.

#### Middle Schooling Association of WA Tax Invoice - Michael Nagel Workshop

ABN: 94250-851-782

(Please make cheque payable to the MSAWA and forward together with registration form to PO Box 6122, Waikiki)

Name & Position		
School		
Address		
Contact	Ph:	Fax:
Email	Workshop selection: Kinross <input type="checkbox"/> Penrhos <input type="checkbox"/>	